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Weapons for Development

Report of the UNDP mission for an Arms Collection Pilot Programme in the Gramsh district - Albania.

Tirana, 4 September 1998

1. Introduction

Among the most serious challenges facing Albania is the easy availability of weapons among the civilian population due to the wide-spread looting that occurred during last years unrest. Estimates of the number of weapons that were taken from depots in Albania in early 1997 are in the region of 600,000.

An illegally armed population has consequences for the ability of the state to pursue economic recovery and political legitimization. So-far only as few as 10% of the looted weapons has been retrieved by the government and uncounted numbers of weapons have probably smuggled out of the country to nearby conflict areas. Although there is a widespread commitment to the policy of weapons collection the Government of Albania is lacking funds for a full fledged implementation. Therefore, the Government of Albania asked the Secretary-General of the United Nations for assistance in devising a programme of weapons collection from the civilian population.

A mission led by Under-Secretary-General Jayantha Dhanapala visited Albania from 11 to 14 June 1998 and concluded that a weapons buy-back programme was not feasible mainly for economic reasons as it would be highly inflationary to send so much money into the Albanian economy in buying back hundreds of thousands of weapons taken from government depots.

The mission therefore recommended to link weapons collection programmes with development incentives benefiting communities as a whole. It was recommended to start with a pilot project in the Gramshi district, 200 km south of Tirana as a test case which - depending on success- would subsequently be undertaken nation-wide.

It was also recommended that the weapons collected, would be publicly destroyed and that the programme should be financially supported by a group of interested states.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations decided, in close cooperation with the UNDP to dispatch a UNDP technical team to Albania which would further assess the feasibility of a weapons collection pilot programme in the Gramsh district and to devise a detailed project proposal.

Terms of reference.

The mission, in close cooperation with the civilian population in the Gramsh District, conducted a rapid assessment of:

- the feasibility of a weapons collection programme;
- the most urgent immediate development needs;
- the feasibility of a comprehensive public awareness programme in the Gramsh District to sensitize the population to the reasons for and benefits of such a programme;

Following an in-depth assessment of the situation both in the field and in consultation with the major actors at the national level, the mission has designed both the conceptional framework and the operational parameters of a comprehensive weapons collection programme in the Gramsh District.

The mission has also taken into account the fact that such programme should subsequently be target the national level and therefore has a local and a national implementation potential.

The mission would like to stress the point that this pilot project offering arms for development is an innovative approach which may get a lot of attention from the international community if it proves to be successful. There are only a few examples to mention like the provision of sewing machines in Mozambique, the provision of labor or jobs in return for weapons or offering training in other countries. Most programmes offering money for weapons (buy-back programmes) failed because they rather created new arms trade with weapons coming from other places than reducing the weapons circulating among the civilian population. Also food for weapons programmes have not created great incentives for turning- in weapons as they were not of a income generating nature.

Thus, the effort to create a better public security environment by strengthening the law and order capacities, together with development actions in return for weapons could be a more promising approach than former initiatives. However, it should be borne in mind that there is no guarantee for success. Success will depend highly on a timely and accurate implementation of the project without loss of momentum in addition to sufficient financial donor support.

2. Methodology

The team spent three days (23-25 August) in Tirana and discussed the elements of a pilot project for weapons collection in the Gramsh district, as recommended by the Dhanapala evaluation mission, with government authorities, heads of international organizations and missions present in Tirana, media, NGO's, the Albanian Development Fund, and individuals.

The team visited the Gramsh district from 26 to 28 August and discussed the weapons for development project with local authorities at the prefecture, district and community level and visited also a number of villages in order to gain an understanding of the considerations of the people about the illicit possession of weapons the villages. From 29 August to 5 September reports have been prepared and feed-back discussions took place with a number of the above mentioned and other personalities.

3. Mission findings and recommendations

The Gramsh district consists of 1 municipality (Gramsh), 9 communes and 91 villages. The total population is about 56,000 (10,000 families) of which 40% is located in and around Gramsh municipality.

The mission found the overall situation in the Gramsh district to be peaceful- notwithstanding the apparent political dispute at the national level and sporadic incidents in the area. It became clear to the mission that there is a general willingness among the population at large to return weapons looted during the riot period of March 1997. Large quantities of weapons and ammunition have already voluntarily been turned in by the civilian population. It is judged by the chairman of the Gramsh district that as a minimum further 10,000 weapons could be collected in the whole of the district. However, the mission cannot assess the appropriateness of this estimate.

It became clear that the Dhanapala mission had already triggered in some of the communes a further collection of weapons possessed by the families in the villages. Thus not only is the prevailing situation in the Gramsh district conducive to providing support, there is also a need to keep the momentum generated by the Dhanapala mission by ensuring earliest possible support. One of the first priorities to be

clarified is the organizational structure, funding and funding mechanisms that are envisaged.

3.1. The public order situation

It should be stressed that there can be no development without security. An integrated approach to security and development is needed. The civil population has no great incentive to turn in their weapons if they see that the local police cannot guarantee their security. So any arms collection programme may ultimately fail if the forces tasked with public order cannot perform their duties. The mission observed that in Gramsh a dual track approach is needed. Weapon collection needs to be accompanied by a strengthening of the capabilities of the district police.

The lack of resources available to the police was a common complaint not only expressed by the head of the police in the Gramsh district but by also all the chairman of the 9 communes. The police force in the Gramsh district consist of 150 persons. (26 officers, 42 non commissioned officers, 68 policemen and 15 civilians)

Manpower as such is not a problem. It is more a problem of the use of the available manpower in the light of the shortage of equipment.

Apart from a brand-new police station the Gramsh police force lacks the most basic equipment such as 4-wheel drive cars, communications, transportable forensic equipment. Commune leaders informed the mission that in a number of communes no police showed up for months. The relationship between police and the civilian population seems to be good: most policemen are from the region. [Based on estimates by the Head of Gramsh Police a budget of about US\$ 205,100 is needed for the provision with the above mentioned equipment.]

An assistance programme for the police should, besides the provision of equipment, include additional training in the democratic application of the law. The low remuneration for the police is another factor of concern which may lead to a breakdown in discipline and to incidents where the security forces become a part of lawlessness rather than part of the solution. The mission understands, however, that the problem of salaries cannot be solved on a local basis.

3.2. The socio-economic aspects of the project.

The mission was informed about the difficult socio-economic situation in the Gramsh district. The mission observed that the rural infrastructure in all the 9 communes is very poor indeed. In a number of communes there are no rural roads connecting villages to the Commune center. Based on a rough estimate there is a need for road reconstruction and road repair of about 90 km. [At a price estimate of US\$ 20,000/ 28,000 per km, costs are in the region of US\$ 1,8 million/ 2,5 million.]

A number of schools were destroyed during the disturbances, others need repair and there is a general lack of education material. District chairman indicated that 10 schools needed to be repaired [at a cost of US\$ 10,000 each.] Health care is virtually non existent at the village and commune level and if some medical support is available it cannot be reached by the remote villages. Ambulances are not available and if they were, they could not be used in most parts of the region due to the lack of rural roads.

Also drinking water and sanitation facilities are scarce throughout Gramsh district. However, most community leaders expressed the view that the overall priority is the improvement of the rural infrastructure. Such an improvement, in parallel with strengthening of the capacities for public order, is undoubtedly a major incentive for a weapon collection programme.

Last but not least, the mission was informed by the local authorities that they badly needed a telephone or cheap radio-relay system up to the commune level. It was indicated that one cheap radio relay system [at a price of US 20,000] would cover 20 villages. [With 91 villages in the Gramsh district this amounts for about US\$ 100,000]

The mission is of the opinion that in the light of the priorities expressed by the people themselves the earliest possible implementation of a rural road and social infrastructure programme would be the best incentive for the surrendering of arms. However, people in the region observed, and that is also the opinion of the mission, that public order is also a basic asset in a peace building programme. Therefore, it is recommended that the provision of funds be targeted to three components, namely strengthening the capacities of the police, a rural road and social infrastructure system, and a public telephone and/or radio relay system connecting the district to all nine communes.¹ Separate agreements will have to be concluded with each community, while not every commune may have the same priorities.

The earliest possible start of the above programmes will be of paramount importance for the weapon collection operation. The mission understands that it will take time before such a comprehensive programme will be fully funded. With the limited financial means at present available, a comprehensive approach, embracing all the 9 communities at the same time, is not possible without additional donor support. However, it will probably take some time before contributions of interested donors will be available and definite commitments can be made. In order not to lose the momentum the mission recommends a phased approach, starting with say one or two communes in the Gramsh district. Priority regarding which commune(s) should come first should be decided by the local actors, in collaboration with the UNDP project manager, and be based on the immediate available funds. The mission understands that UNDP may be able to provide immediately the necessary funds for some public order support and one commune, to start with. It goes without saying that the first tranche of the proposed public awareness programme (see chapter 3.7.) should be implemented in parallel with the above projects.

3.3. Some general observations regarding the development activities of the Pilot project

- The execution / implementation modality has not yet been decided upon. It is clear, however, that there will be a range of national capacity building requirements among the involved national partners. Considering that the objective is to progressively turn this into a national programme it is therefore vital that capacity building activities are built into the programme from the very beginning. Such activities should be related to any type of national partner - be it Government or civil society.
- As part of Albania's general development priorities, it is likely that various sector ministries have development projects under planning and/or preparation for the target area. It will be important that Government, in endorsing and moving ahead with this joint UN-Govt. programme, guarantees the required inter-ministerial coordination to ensure that such planned projects are NOT launched at a time and in such a form that it causes problems for the overall aim of this joint Govt-UN programme. This could mean that in some cases sector ministries would need to await that the first phase is implemented before launching their projects. This has the added advantage that strategies tested and lessons learnt from this programme can be fed into other Government sectoral programmes in the same area thereby considerably expanding the medium term impact.

3.4. Trust fund

In order to channel possible donor participation, the establishment of a special Trust fund for the Pilot programme should be considered, dedicated to the provision of security assistance for the district police and for the arms collection and development projects in the remaining communes in the Gramsh district.

The main purpose for such a fund is to streamline, otherwise complex bureaucratic procedures and speed up implementation of the weapons collection programme. The Trust fund would be open to any contributions from internal and external (donor) sources. It could be used to attract donations from sources, such as the private sector, charity agencies and international organizations. The Trust fund should operate under responsibility of UNDP. Participation by donors in the Trust fund will - as experienced in other countries- enhance the momentum of this kind of processes. The mission would like to emphasize that if early and substantial donor support cannot be realized it will not be possible to implement the whole project with serious consequences for its credibility.

3.5. The weapons collection operation

Large military weapon depots were situated in the Gramsh military district together with a weapon factory. The mission learned that weapons and ammunition are now relocated in two main weapon depots which seem to be now adequately protected.

Substantial numbers of weapons and ammunition have already been voluntarily collected from the civilian population during the first rounds of weapon collection by special collection teams organized by the district authorities. A number of these weapons have already been returned to the military depots and others are stored in the police headquarters in Gramsh. During the first rounds of voluntary weapons collection by the local authorities, reportedly, about 4000 weapons, including automatic weapons, rifles, machine guns, anti-tank weapons, anti-aircraft machine guns, mortars, grenade launchers and large quantities of ammunitions, including hand grenades, anti-tank grenades and over 12 million rounds of ammunition have been turned in. According to estimates by the District chairman and the Police Commissioner roughly at least 10,000 weapons are still in the hands of the households in the district.² The table below gives an impression of the concentration of weapons in the Gramsh district.

LEVEL OF CONCENTRATION OF THE ARMAMENTS -

Municipality/ Commune	Number of Villages	Number of Families	Number of Inhabitants	Existing Depot on the Commune or in Periphery	Weapons Collecting Campaign Initiated by Police	Motivation of detention of the weapons by the inhabitants	Expressed Possibilities of Recovery
GRAMSH TOWN		3600	16,000	Cekreze + Cekin	Yes	Traffic + self- protection	Unknown
PISHAJ	20	1600	8700	Cekreze + Selte	No	Traffic + self- protection	>1600
SKENDERBEGAS	13	770	3300	Non	Yes	Self-protection	800+Ammunitions
POROCAN	5	780	3000	Selte	No	Self-protection	800+Ammunitions
KUSHOVE	8	460	2200	Non	No	Traffic+self- protection	>1000 + Ammunitions
SULT	9	450	2500	Non	No	Self-protection	>1000
TUNJE	12	800	4000	Non	No	Self-protection	800
LENIE	6	500	3300	Teqa + Molla Graboves	Yes	Traffic + Self- protection	>500 + Ammunitions + Explosives
KODOVJAT	12	1200	6000	Yes in Periphery	Yes in 8 Villages	Traffic + Self- protection	>1200
KUKUR	10	1100	5300	Cekreze	Yes	Traffic + Self- protection	1500 + Ammunitions

Source ADF

As long as the capacities of the police are not strengthened and the public security situation remains unstable it was suggested that in remote villages, the village chief might keep, legally registered, say 3-5 weapons in a safe place for self-defense. This would greatly contribute to the voluntary collection of surplus weapons. The mission supports this approach because in the light of the difficult geographical situation police cannot be always timely present in such remote areas.

The weapon collection process could best be organized at the commune level. As soon as in the commune concerned, development elements of the project are agreed upon and funding has been secured, the collection process will start. Collection must be completed before implementation of the development project commence and should not last longer than one to two weeks. Collected weapons and ammunition should preferably be destroyed on the spot to avoid complicated transport problems. An additional advantage of the proposed phased weapons collection is that weapon collection can start at short notice, pending approval by the Albanian Government and UNDP/New York. Taking into account a one years programme, collection and destruction in the first commune(s) could take place in November 1998.

In this period road conditions in the Gramsh district may slow down the speed of the arms collection operation. In the winter period several villages will be isolated from the commune centers, making it impossible to transport weapons by car. Weapons and ammunition may have to be brought downhill to the commune center by donkeys or carried by hand.

3.6. Weapon destruction

The Government of Albania already acknowledged its intention to destroy most of the recovered weapons to Under Secretary Dhanapala during his visit in June 1998. He was told that the Government is committed to destroy most of the weapons it collects, partly because it believes that these are outmoded and unsuited for a modernized national security apparatus and to assure those who are concerned that the retrieved weapons may be held by the Government to be used for its own purposes. As a first step Albania has already discontinued domestic manufacture of weapons.

The mission learned from the Deputy Minister of Defense that with respect to the destruction of the collected weapons, in particular those which cannot be used anymore, may be destroyed publicly in the context of the Pilot project.

The mission suggests that the government may invite international observers to verify the collection and destruction of the collected weapons.

3.7. The public awareness campaign.

In the course of the mission the team met with various media officials in Albania who concurred with the view that disarmament is an urgent national priority and that they would therefore pledge their full collaboration and support for an arms awareness information effort in support of the planned weapons collection project in Gramsh, together with a national campaign to raise the awareness level of the overall population regarding disarmament. Indeed it was felt that the two elements would be mutually supporting and would have a multiplier effect, the success of the local project in Gramsh becoming a possible example for a similar effort in other regions and ultimately embracing all districts of Albania.

Given communication patterns in the country, the mission recommends that the two main communication vectors, together with the written media, will be the television and radio operating in a coordinated and mutually supporting manner.

The mission learned that while it is felt that the present radio coverage in the district of Gramsh- both in MW and FM- is sufficient to commence an information effort, additional equipment would certainly improve radio reception in the remote villages.

Television coverage in Gramsh district now only impacts about 80 % of the population and reception is poor even in some parts of the city itself. In order to improve reception quality and to restore reception to some 95 % of the population, three 2 W relay stations would have to be procured.

From the above it appears that the provision of some relay stations would have the immediate effect of raising FM and TV reception to close to 95% of the population. Such an improvement, coming as part of a weapons collection operation would have an instant positive effect on a population for which radio and television are the only sources of both news and entertainment.

As regards implementation of the public awareness programme the mission suggest a step by step approach, to be expanded and adjusted as the weapons collection program proceeds. Public awareness should commence slightly prior to the first actual collection programme. While all the details of such an awareness programme cannot all be anticipated it will have to closely follow developments regarding arms collection and, if necessary, anticipate them. Therefore, the mission recommends:

- Early identification of a programme coordinator, based in Tirana, for the awareness aspects of the pilot project.

- A half day familiarization workshop in Tirana for radio and television journalists from Tirana and the region.
- Startup of the radio and television awareness campaign implementation at the national level by the increase of news items.
- Provision of technical support to the Radio and TV in Tirana and Gramsh (light equipment, some relay stations for Gramsh, funding for local coverage, etc.)
- Expansion of the media efforts in Gramsh in parallel with the collection process through involvement of other groups (teachers, children etc.) and of other vectors (T-shirts, etc.) at the Gramsh level.
- High media coverage of the actual weapon collection programmes in the Gramsh district.

The mission believes that, given the current psychological climate in the country, an awareness campaign in parallel with weapons collection and development assistance will play a major role in addressing the aims of the Pilot programme. As Gramsh being the target area a specific programme should be started in Gramsh using means adapted to the local situation. The mission recommends to provide at short notice for a mobile information team which will cover all the 9 communes. The team will operate for say one month and require one 4-wheel drive vehicle with a mounted loud speaker installation. [The mission estimates the initial costs for the public awareness campaign at about US\$ 30,000 (first 3 months) followed by an additional US\$ 54700 for the programme as a whole.]

4. The involvement of NGO's

Based on international experiences and in view of the existence of a number of NGO's in Albania the mission recommends that national NGO's such as, Association for Disarmament, Association of Women, Association for the Protection against harm for Weapons, The Association for Conflict Solution, The Independent Forum of Albanian Women, The Association "Anti-Mines Friends, should be encouraged to participate in this pilot project. Also with respect tot the development element of the pilot project the involvement of both national and international NGO's should be assessed. At present , only national NGO's are working in the Gramsh district.

5. Recommended organizational structures

The mission has been informed that a new law on the collection of weapons and military ammunition has recently been approved by parliament. The law regulates both the voluntary surrender and obligatory collection of weapons, the registration of weapons as well as measures which help the strengthening of the public order and crime prevention. Care should be taken that the UNDP pilot project and the new regulations will be mutually supportive. The law on the Collection of Weapons and Military Ammunition of 5 August 1998, includes the establishment of a Central Commission for the Collection of Weapons, chaired by the deputy Prime minister.³ The law dictates that also a Commission for Weapons Collection will be established at prefecture⁴ and district level. The members of the local commissions will be appointed by the prefect, following where possible, the same structure of the prefecture commissions.

The mission would like to emphasize that it is impossible to have simultaneously a pilot project, based on voluntary weapons surrender, and a policy of coercive weapons confiscation in the Gramsh district. Such an approach would seriously damage the credibility of the pilot project.

Therefore it is recommended that the Government Commission for the Collection of Weapons at the district level will not be made operational for the duration of the Pilot project. The mission assumes that UNDP will provide overall coordination for programming and implementation of the various activities within the pilot project.

The mission recommends a bottom-up management structure, with steering groups at the level of the communes and the district. These groups will be involved in both the choice of projects and the actual collection of weapons and ammunition. It is important that close cooperation be established between

these groups, the field manager of the UNDP Pilot project, and the above mentioned governmental commissions.

The mission recommends that a field project unit be located in Gramsh or Elbasan, with overall responsibilities for the pilot project as a whole. Based on international experience the unit manager could best be recruited from abroad. He will be seconded by a national weapon collection expert (retired officer), a development specialist and a part-time public awareness campaign coordinator, based in Tirana. [Estimated costs for fielding the office for 1 year: \$ 100,000.]

6. Involvement of other international organizations and missions

The mission met with representatives of a number of international organizations and missions present in Tirana. The mission observed that a number of activities already in process in the field of security assistance and weapons control could perhaps be implemented in the context of the pilot project. OSCE is assisting the government in building the judicial system. In this context support for awareness campaigns, seminars on police/civilian relations and weapons collections could be envisaged. Head of the OSCE presence in Albania indicated that some funds are available in support of such programmes. European Union's phare programme includes a programme to improve the logistics of the Albanian police.⁵ Under the partnership for Peace programme (PfP), NATO may be interested to take part in the weapons collection and ammunition destruction programmes. Several bilateral programmes, such as to a relocation of the weapon and ammunition depots and destruction of ammunition (Italy, Germany) and training of media people (Switzerland) are running. There may be others- not known to this mission- involved in programmes which could be related to the pilot project.

For the development activities it will be necessary to assess how various UN agencies can become partners, whether in the field (development) activities or, in the broader capacity building required for the successful implementation of the programme.

The mission recommends that as soon as possible a round table be organized with all those interested in the UNDP pilot project to investigate possibilities for cooperation under the umbrella of this project.

7. Project strategy and implementation

Based on the above analysis the following project strategy and project implementation has been developed.

The project strategy will consist of the voluntarily weapons collection through a "weapons for development" philosophy, targeting a pilot district.

The recent governmental law on Disarmament, being somewhat in conflict with the above said philosophy, should not be applied to the pilot project district. This compromise is a pre-condition for the project implementation and the achievement of the expected results/outcomes.

The weapons collection operation envisaged in the project should include a main component consisting of development interventions resulting from a demand driven and a bottom up approach.

The weapons collection operation and development aspects should be preceded and accompanied by a strong public awareness campaign at the district/prefecture and national level and accompanied by a substantial assistance to the strengthening of the public order at the district level.

The weapons collection operation itself should precede and take place right before the start of development interventions implementation.

The public awareness campaign should accompany the whole process for intensifying the impact of the pilot project within and outside the project area.

A resource mobilization campaign should start simultaneously with the project approval and be kept operational during project implementation.

Project implementation

It is clear that the present situation has been provoked by a series of interrelated social, political and economic factors. Therefore, the project, aiming at identifying an appropriate solution for re-establishing stability, will inevitably be confronted with complex matters. For a sound and successful implementation, the project needs to collaborate with a wide number of actors and be as transparent as possible.

UNDP will provide overall coordination for the project implementation, a project unit will be established at the district level.

The project unit will closely collaborate with the government commission for disarmament at the prefecture and district level, the steering committees that may be established at the communes and district level in light of project implementation, the district political parties' branches, the local NGO/CBO's, the order and military forces at the district level, as well as with the media at the local and national level. In addition, the project unit will directly monitor the progress of the weapons collection operation and the implementation of the development activities in case a different implementing agency would have been identified.

The project unit will closely and continuously be in touch with UNDP, being the project interface for coordination of activities with the National Disarmament Commission, Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Interior etc.

Actions

The following sequence of actions is proposed:

1. Circulation of this draft report in Gramsh and Tirana for comments and inputs.
2. Organization of a round table in Tirana as mentioned above.
3. The organization of a workshop in Gramsh to discuss ways and means for the practical implementation of the pilot project. (preparing priority list communities, organization of steering committees, time tables, sequence of activities, organizational aspects, etc.) We recommend that UNDP sponsor and organize this workshop together with the District local authorities and interested NGO's.
4. The organization of a conference on arms control in Albania in the context of the national public awareness campaign with the presence of foreign experts on arms collection. At the conference the new Albanian Arms control Law and the pilot project in Gramsh could be presented. The mission learned that such a conference coincides with a already planned conference by the Albanian Atlantic Association. The mission recommends that this conference be cosponsored by UNDP if it is agreed by the Atlantic Association to organize this conference in the context of the Pilot project.
5. The immediate establishment of the project unit for the Pilot project.
6. To start the public awareness campaign as suggested above in parallel with the weapon collection in the first commune(s) to be chosen.

Tentative time schedule

September 1998

- Round table with interested international organizations (OSCE, EU, World bank, PfP, Maape, individual countries, etc.) to assess possibilities for cooperation/participation in pilot project.
- Formal approval pilot project proposal by Government of Albania and UNDP/New York
- Establishing organizational and coordination structure between Government and UNDP

October 1998

- Recruiting personnel for project management, including public awareness project and organization management in Gramsh · Fielding project unit
- Organizing technical workshop in Gramsh
- Organizing media workshop in Tirana, with participation of local media from Tirana and Gramsh
- Establishing steering committees in communes of Gramsh district
- Fielding UNDP project unit.

November 1998

- Collection of weapons in the priority commune(s)
- Destruction ceremony
- Start of development project, pending weather conditions
- Providing Police Gramsh district with (the first tranche of) assistance means (cooperation with EU - PHARE programme)

December 1998, etc.

Continuation of the programme

8. Follow on

The pilot project will last one year. Subject to a successful outcome it will be necessary to decide on a continuation in other districts ultimately covering the whole of Albania. The most obvious approach would than be to chose one or more adjacent districts of the same prefecture and continue the process with the experience gained. Another possibility may be to integrate weapon collection programmes in the Government's development plans.

9. Evaluation

Six months after the start of the pilot project an evaluation should be made regarding the success rate of the project. Rather than counting numbers of collected weapons and ammunition, the emphasis should be on the public order situation compared to the situation before the pilot project.

The law and order situation could be judged by an evaluation team which could observe the situation on the spot in discussions with citizens and local authorities, through statistical comparisons with other districts and through analysis of the crime rates trends in the Gramsh district.

10. Summary of recommendations

10.1.

A weapons for development project can only be realized if a relatively stable security situation exists. The mission recommends that a dual-track approach be developed: the weapon collection process needs to be accompanied by a substantial strengthening of the capacities of the police in the Gramsh district.

10.2.

The Weapons collection and development operation should be preceded and accompanied by a strong public awareness campaign at the district/prefect and national level. At short notice, a mobile information team should be organized to inform the communes on the spot about the pilot project.

10.3.

In light of priorities expressed by the people in Gramsh district the provision of funds should be targeted to three components: 1). strengthening capacities of the police, 2) infrastructure intervention (including social infrastructure) 3) the establishment of a cheap communication system, connecting the communes to the district. However, in agreements with individual communes, other priorities may be identified and agreed upon.

10.4.

To keep momentum, and taking into account the limited immediate available financial means, the mission recommends a phased approach, starting with one or two communes.

10.5.

Without substantial early donor participation the full project cannot be realized. A special Trust fund for donor participation should be established to this effect.

10.6.

Weapon collection should be organized at the commune level. Collection should precede and take place right before the start of development implementation. Collection operations should not last longer than one or two weeks in the communes concerned.

10.7.

Collected weapons and ammunition should be publicly destroyed on the spot.

10.8.

National NGO's should be encouraged to participate in the pilot project.

10.9.

A bottom-up management structure with steering groups at the commune and district level should be established, tasked with both the choice of projects and the actual collection of weapons and ammunition.

10.10.

A UNDP field project unit should be located in Gramsh or Elbasan, with overall project responsibility.

10.11.

Close cooperation need to be established between the governmental weapons collection commissions, the district steering group and the UNDP field project unit.

10.12.

Involvement of international organizations, missions and individual countries, present in Albania, should be actively sought. A round table should be organized at short notice with all those interested in the pilot project to investigate possibilities for cooperation and early implementation.

10.13.

A technical workshop should be organized in Gramsh to discuss ways and means for the implementation of the pilot project (establishing priorities, organizational aspects, establishment steering committees, sequence of activities, etc.)

10.14.

The Albanian Atlantic Association has already planned an arms control conference in Tirana in October next. It is recommended that this conference be organized in the context of the pilot project. If this is the case, UNDP could co-sponsor this conference.

10.15.

As part of Albania's general development priorities it is likely that various sector ministries have development projects under planning and/or preparation for the target area. It will be important that Government, in endorsing and moving ahead with this joint UN-Govt. programme, guarantees that such planned projects are not launched at a time and in such a form that it causes problems for the overall aim of the Pilot programme.

10.16.

Close coordination between Albanian Development Fund (ADF) and UNDP is important to ensure that projects in the same area mutually support each other.

Tirana, 4 September 1998

Brigadier-General (ret) Henny J. van der Graaf
Consultant

1 The exact needs may be reshaped after further discussions with the local population and the findings of the Albanian Development Fund, who conducted a detailed needs assessment.

2 The mission would like to stress the point that any judgement about numbers of weapons illegally circulating and numbers which may already be smuggled out of the region are purely speculative.

3 Members of the National Commission for the Collection of Weapons are: Minister of Public Order, Minister of Defense, Head of SHIK, Army Chief General Staff, Director General of Police, Director General of Local Government.

4 The Prefecture Commission for Weapons Collection consist of: Prefect (chairman), Prefecture Police Directors, Heads of district councils, Mayors, commanders of military units.

5 Delegate of the European Commission in Albania informed the mission that, among others, 35 4-wheel drives and uniforms will be handed over to the Albanian Police.

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